

Dear Members of the State Board of Education:

Please find attached the following PDF files of  
(a) signatures (filename: Signatures\_Framework\_Ch15\_Concerns\_1of2.pdf) and (b)  
other supporting documents.

The signatures and documents are being sent to express concerns about inaccuracies in proposed additions to the Draft History-Social Science Framework. Specifically, Chapter 15: Grade Ten – World History, Culture, and Geography, Lines 913-919. The inaccurate passages begin with “‘Comfort Women,’ a euphemism for sexual slaves, were taken by the Japanese Army....”

In total, 1,052 people **hand-signed** in the petition to express serious concern:

**526** obtained in CA

**50** in other US states

**476** in Japan

As a Ph.D. scholar and father of two children attending schools in California, I, along with many others, feel that these inaccurate passages may promote misunderstanding and prejudice, in contradiction to the mission of public education, which should advance equality, fairness, and harmony.

Misconceptions on this topic have already evoked prejudice at Sunny Hills High School (Fullerton, CA), where a young Korean (American) student spoke negatively about Japanese Americans as a whole, and his anti-Japanese-American comments were disseminated in the school paper (see attachment). Japanese Americans clearly had nothing to do with comfort women.

The original signed sheets will be delivered to Mr. Tom Torlakson, State Superintendent of Public Instruction. Another PDF file of signatures (filename: Signatures\_Framework\_Ch15\_Concerns\_2of2.pdf) is being sent via another email message due to the large file size.

Below is a summary of inaccuracies in the proposed additions to the framework.

Thank you for reading my letter.

Sincerely,

Masaaki Oto, Ph.D.  
625 Hermosa Place  
Davis, CA 95616

## BRIEF REVIEW OF COMFORT WOMEN HISTORY

The history of Comfort Women is highly disputed between the nations of S. Korea and Japan. Many facts have become distorted and exaggerated by anti-Japanese activists. Reputable South Korean-born professors, Yu-ha Park ( <http://goo.gl/uSWM44> ) and C. Sarah Soh ( <http://goo.gl/C83b8C> ), who interviewed Korean Comfort Women and researched the subject in great detail, report that most Korean Comfort Women were recruited by civilians, that most worked at civilian-owned brothels, that many were paid (or their families had been paid), and that the women could return home when they served a certain number of years or fulfilled their indenture. The research by these professors indicates that, in Korea, Comfort Women were *not* systematically abducted by Japanese Imperial Army.

Historical evidence indicates: In the early 1900s, many people in Korea and Japan lived in dire poverty. The vast majority of Korean Comfort Women had been sent by their parents in exchange for advance payment or joined on their own, driven by poverty and the patriarchal nature of Korean society, where daughters were often under-appreciated and given little autonomy. The brokers who recruited Korean Comfort Women were civilians, and many were Korean men; dishonest brokers deceived the women.

Some instances of forcible recruitment did occur in territory Japan occupied during the war, but were committed by rogue soldiers acting illicitly. The soldiers were later brought to justice in a post-war war crimes court. Unfortunately, these cases have been inappropriately generalized to all Comfort Women by agenda-driven activists, and these misconceptions propagated by the media. Historically, other nations' militaries have committed misconduct (e.g., S. Korean forces committed massacres, rapes, and used prostitutes during the Vietnam War), and it is unfair to target just Japan. When only one group is selectively targeted, it is "profiling" and, thus, wrong.

## SPECIFIC ISSUES WITH THE PROPOSED PASSAGES (IN CHAPTER 15)

(1) Lines 917-919: "most argue that hundreds of thousands of women were forced into these situations during Japanese occupation."

*EVIDENCE-BASED FINDINGS:* All historians and scholars agree that the exact number of comfort women is uncertain [Refs. 1,2]. However, estimates by several scholars who conduct research on this topic range typically in the tens of thousands [Refs. 1,3]. Although "most" activists and some politically-based groups claim the number is "hundreds of thousands," reputable scholars generally do not state such a high number without disclaimers.

(2) Lines 913-915. "'Comfort Women,' a euphemism for sexual slaves, were taken by the Japanese Army in occupied territories before and during the war."

*EVIDENCE-BASED FINDINGS:* Scholars and researchers have confirmed that most Korean comfort women were recruited by civilians (not the Japanese Army), served for defined periods of time, were often paid (or their families paid), and were allowed to return home. [Refs 1-4] As such, many scholars in the field explicitly do not use the expression "sexual slavery", as it would be misleading. The expression "sexual slaves" was popularized by, inter alia, lawyers filing lawsuits, activists, politicians, journalists conveying what others said, and certain historians with an agenda, and thus now permeates the Internet and media.

(3) Lines 915-917. "'Comfort Women' can be taught as an example of institutionalized sexual slavery, and one of the largest cases of human trafficking in the twentieth century."

*EVIDENCE-BASED FINDINGS:* As the number of comfort women is uncertain (see above), it would be inappropriate to claim outright that it is "one of the largest cases of human trafficking" of the last century. Again, many neutral scholars explicitly avoid the expression "sexual slavery", as it would be misleading. A small fraction of comfort women in territories Japan occupied during the war (e.g., Indonesia) were forcibly acquired by local military personnel, but this was done by soldiers acting independently [Ref. 1]. The women were freed after about two months when a higher ranking officer discovered the situation, and the personnel responsible were later punished.

## TESTIMONIALS FROM FORMER KOREAN COMFORT WOMEN

From Ref [1]:

Sun-ok Kim recalled: "My father entreated me and said, '...It's your misfortune to have someone like me as a father...' Within a fortnight after my return home from Sinuiju, I was sold for a fourth time and sent off to a military comfort station in Manchuria in 1941." (p. 11)

Kun-ja Kim's original testimonial, "published in 1999, revealed that her foster father 'sold' her." Kim also reportedly stated she "hated the father more than the Japanese military." (p. 101)

Yong-Su Yi originally stated, "Without letting my mother know, I simply left home by following my friend." (pp. 99-100)

From audio recording ( <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT2q6uSP4s4> ):

"It wasn't the Japanese government" that did human trafficking; Korean agents were part of human trafficking. (at time: 37:31 min - 38:03 min [Translated 38:04 - 38:24])

## References

[1] C. Sarah Soh, "The Comfort Women," University of Chicago Press, Chicago (2008).

- [2] Yuha Park, "Comfort Women of the Empire," Asahi Shimbun Publications (2014).  
[3] Ikuhito Hata, "No Organized or Forced Recruitment: Misconceptions about Comfort Women and the Japanese Military," Professor Emeritus, Nihon University.  
[4] United States Office of War Information Report No. 49, 1944 (Enclosed are a copy of original documents and the transcripts)  
(All Refs at <http://goo.gl/9xM3LL> )

## FINAL COMMENTS

Few things are more important than children's education, and it is essential that history be taught in a fair, neutral, and fact-based way. The tragic results of history being taught in a biased way can be seen in the Middle East, where past misdeeds are often exaggerated and only one side's version of events is presented. We urge that the proposed additions (lines 913-919) be shelved until their veracity is confirmed/disproved in a neutral and unbiased way, e.g., by consulting scholars who have conducted in-person research in this field, such as Prof. C. Sarah Soh (San Francisco State University), and Prof. Yuha Park (Sejong University, S. Korea), and Prof. George Akita (University of Hawaii).